

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)
COMPLIANCE RECORD FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS (CX)
U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

PART I – PROPOSED ACTION

BLM Office: Tucson Field Office

NEPA No.: DOI-BLM-AZ-G020-2015-0024-CX

Proposed Action Title: Trico IFNM ROW
Renewal

Case File No.: AZA-035754

Applicant: Trico Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Location of the Proposed Action: Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona
T. 12 S. R. 9 E.

sec. 19, SW1/4SE1/4;
sec. 25, lots 3 and 4;
sec. 26, lots 1-4 inclusive;
sec. 27, lots 1-4 inclusive;
sec. 28, lots 1-4 inclusive;
sec. 29, lots 1-4 inclusive;
sec. 30, lots 1 and 2.

Description of Proposed Action: The proposed action involves the reauthorization of the BLM administered ROW, which contains a 14.4/24.9-kV electric distribution power lines owned, operated and maintained by Trico Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Trico). The line is located within the Ironwood Forest National Monument. The reauthorization (renewal) request is for the 20-foot-wide, 26,912-foot long (@ 4.53-miles) ROW easement across BLM lands. The ROW authorization would be valid for a period of 30 years, with the right to request renewal at that time. Maintenance on the existing lines and power poles are currently not scheduled at this time. Specific distribution line upgrades are not authorized with this renewal.

Future maintenance of the existing electrical infrastructure will include replacing individual poles and any other necessary repairs relating to pole replacement. Maintenance may also include pruning existing vegetation within the ROW to maintain clearance limits. Before any vegetation is considered to be removed or trimmed, Trico will be required to submit a vegetation inventory and work plan to BLM. At that time the BLM will determine the level of vegetation removal/trimming and any monetary compensation for the loss of natural resources. Trico will consult with the BLM on all matters related to future maintenance affecting the subject power line and any plans for access roads or staging areas and equipment that have not been identified in their ROW application. For any future upgrades and/or increases of voltage to the transmission line, Trico will be required to submit a request for an Amendment of the ROW. Trico will also be required to submit a Plan of Development or Circuit Map, which displays the location of all infrastructure, to the BLM prior to any additional work proposed to be conducted in this ROW.

The biological evaluation (BE) identified five Nichol Turk's Head cacti in the ROW or in close proximity to it. The Nichol Turk's Head is listed as endangered on the Endangered Species List. In addition the BE discovered a Sonoran Desert Tortoise den in close proximity to the ROW. ROW stipulations will be added to the ROW grant that Trico provide on-site monitoring during all maintenance activities to protect any listed species.

PART II – PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW

This proposed action is subject to the following land use plan(s): The Ironwood Forest National Monument Resource Management Plan (2013).

Decisions and page nos.: Ironwood Forest National Monument Resource Management Plan. Page 76 LR-002 "Manage rights-of-way to avoid or minimize impacts on Monument Objects".

Date plan approved/amended: February 2013

This proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with these plans (*43 CFR 1610.5-3, BLM Manual 1601.04.C.2*).

PART III – NEPA COMPLIANCE DETERMINATION REVIEW

- A. The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 [E. Realty 11: Conversion of existing right-of-way grants to Title V grants or existing leases to FLPMA Section 302(b) leases where no new facilities or other changes are needed.];**

And

- B. Extraordinary Circumstances Review:** In accordance with **43 CFR 46.215**, any action that is normally categorically excluded must be subject to sufficient environmental review to determine if it meets any of the 12 Extraordinary Circumstances described. If any circumstances applies to the action or project, and existing NEPA documentation does not adequately address it, then further NEPA analysis is required.

IMPORTANT: Appropriate staff should review the circumstances listed in Part IV, comment and initial for concurrence. Rationale supporting the concurrence should be included in the appropriate block.

PART IV – EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION

PREPARERS:

DATE:

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Kyle Prinster | 8/3/2015 |
| Linda Dunlavey | 10/1/2015 |
| Amy Sobiech | 9/10/2015 |
| Darrell Tersey | 12/14/2015 |
| Leslie Uhr | 12/14/2015 |
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| PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST /s/ Dan Moore, Acting P&EC | | DATE 12/15/2015 | |
| The action has been reviewed to determine if any of the extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215(a)-(1)) apply. The project would: | | | |
| (a) Have significant impacts on public health or safety. | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action will not cause significant impacts on public health or safety. The activities of the proposed action do not pose any threat to public health or safety. The project area is remote and poses no threat. | Preparer's Initials kp |
| (b) Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas. | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action will not have a significant impact on such natural resources or unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principle drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; or other ecologically significant or critical areas. The project area is located within a national monument but the proposed action is in conformance with the IFNM RMP page 76 LR-002. Refer to attached cultural stipulations, section 4.0. | Preparer's Initials kp, as |
| (c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102 (2) (E)]. | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action or its activities should not cause any conflicts or highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning the alternative uses of resources. The ROW is already established so no issues or conflicts will result in the proposed action. | Preparer's Initials kp |
| (d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action does not have or involve any features that will have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. All risks and impacts from a 14.4 kV power line are known, the line has been established for 30 years. | Preparer's Initials kp |

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| (e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principal about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action will not establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects because the line already exists. | Preparer's Initials kp |
| (f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action will not have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. The line already exists and is isolated enough that no other actions will impact this project. According to the IFNM proposed RMP section 4.7 Cumulative Impacts from utilities to other resources such as wildlife and wildlife habitat have been considered and analyzed in IFNM RMP. | Preparer's Initials kp, dt |
| (g) Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau. | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action will not have a significant impact on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the Bureau. Refer to attached stipulations, cultural section 4.0. | Preparer's Initials kp, as |
| (h) Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species. | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action will not have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species. Stipulations set forth will ensure the safety and survival of all listed species in accordance with the Biological Evaluation. Refer to attached stipulations, environmental section 3.4 and 6.0. | Preparer's Initials kp, dt |
| (i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action does not violate federal law, or a state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. The applicant is required to comply with all laws, stipulations and resource management plans under this grant. | Preparer's Initials kp |

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| (j) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action does not have a disproportionately high or adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive order 12898). The proposed action is located in a rural setting and only provides power to Pioneer Sands. | Preparer's Initials kp |
| (k) Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007). | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action will not limit any access to or ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites. | Preparer's Initials kp, as |
| (l) Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112). | | | |
| Yes | No X | Rationale: The proposed action will not contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species. Stipulations will include procedure that will be required by all vehicles and equipment used for the maintenance to be properly cleaned so to prevent the spread/introduction of non-native species. See attached stipulations Weeds section 7.0. | Preparer's Initials kp, dt |
| PART V – COMPLIANCE REVIEW CONCLUSION I have reviewed this plan conformance and NEPA compliance record, and have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required. MITIGATION MEASURES/OTHER REMARKS: See attached stipulations. APPROVING OFFICIAL: /s/ Melissa Warren DATE: 12/16/2015 TITLE: Field Manager | | | |

Note: The signed conclusion on this compliance record is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. A separate decision to implement the action should be prepared in accordance with program specific guidance.